

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 037568

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, US, UK

SUBJECT: UK AMBASSADOR CALL ON SECRETARY BROWN

1. UK AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM CALLED ON SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN FEBRUARY 14 TO PRESENT LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE MULLEY OUTLINING PROPOSED UK DEFENSE CUTS. (WE ASSUME ADDRESSEES NOW HAVE TEXT OF PAPER FOR PERMREPS APPENDED TO MULLEY LETTER). RAMSBOTHAM STRESSED HMG'S CONTINUED DETERMINATION TO AVOID REDUCTIONS WHICH WEAKEN UK CONTRIBUTION TO NATO AND NOTED BUDGET WHITE PAPER WOULD NOT BE MADE PUBLIC UNTIL FEBRUARY 28 THUS KEEPING PROMISE TO DISCUSS WITH US AND OTHER ALLIES BEFORE REDUCTIONS WERE MADE PUBLIC.

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2. SEC DEF EXPRESSED CONCERN CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF UK CUTS COULD WEAKEN US CONTRIBUTION TO NATO. HE NOTED THAT WHILE US UNDERSTOOD UK'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, QUESTION OF WHERE UK PLACED BUDGET PRIORITIES WAS OF COURSE GERMANE. SEC DEF NOTED US WOULD SOON BE ANNOUNCING CHANGES IN THE DEFENSE BUDGET SUBMITTED BY PRESIDENT FORD IN EARLY JANUARY; THAT THESE WERE DESIGNED TO EFFECT SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES; AND

THAT NET IMPACT WOULD BE TO STRENGTHEN READINESS CAPABILITIES OF US CONVENTIONAL FORCES ASSIGNED TO NATO. EVEN WITH CHANGES THE FY '78 US DEFENSE BUDGET WILL REPRESENT MORE THAN THREE PERCENT REAL GROWTH OVER FY '77.

3. RAMSBOTHAM SAID MULLEY/LEBER MEETING ON MARGINS OF MUNICH WEHRKUNDE GATHERING HAD NOT RESOLVED AWACS IMPASSE. MULLEY EMPHASIZED UK NEEDED NATO AWACS DECISION BY END MARCH. HOWEVER, HE WAS UNCERTAIN LEBER HAD FULLY GRASPED UK DETERMINATION. RAMSBOTHAM HOPED US UNDERSTOOD BRITISH WANT TO GO WITH AWACS BUT FURTHER DELAYS MIGHT FORCE THEM TO ADOPT NIMROD.

4. SEC DEF SAID US FULLY UNDERSTOOD BRITISH PROBLEM. HE TOLD RAMSBOTHAM HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH LEBER INDICATING US WILLINGNESS TO JOIN FRG IN SHOWING FLEXIBILITY IN ORDER RESOLVE FINANCIAL SHARES AND COST ISSUE AND HAD STRESSED NEW ADMINISTRATION'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR AWACS. HOWEVER, SEC DEF CONTINUED, IF GERMANS OR OTHER ALLIES DO NOT WANT AWACS US WAS NOT GOING TO FORCE IT ON THEM. NATO AWACS HAD TO BE A COLLECTIVE EFFORT. THE US FOR ITS PART HAD MADE ITS CHOICE AND HAS PROCURED AWACS AIRCRAFT.

5. RAMSBOTHAM CLOSED MEETING BY RAISING US/UK PROCUREMENT MOU AND "TWO-WAY STREET" ISSUE. HE SAID THAT BALANCE IN DEFENSE PROCUREMENT BETWEEN US AND UK HAD WORSENER AGAINST UK IN RECENT MONTHS AND THAT FULL US COOPERATION WAS IMPERATIVE IF WE WERE TO MAKE TWO-WAY STREET A REALITY. IN THIS CONNECTION HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD US AIR FORCE AND NAVY HAD NOT ACCEPTED IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS UNDER US/UK CONFIDENTIAL

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PROCUREMENT MOU. US SIDE ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFICULTIES WITH IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS AND NOTED MEETING OF US/UK MO' PROCUREMENT STEERING GROUP WAS SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AND THAT US HAD ANTICIPATED THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THAT TIME.
HARTMAN

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